



**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

**In re Patent Application of:**

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**For:**

**Combination Warning Flag and Storage Bag**

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**COMBINATION WARNING FLAG AND STORAGE BAG****Field of the Invention:**

This invention relates generally to storage bags for storing small items. More particularly, in one form the invention relates to storage bags which are particularly suited for marine use. The bag may also be used as a warning flag 5 for long loads.

**Background of the Invention:**

For the storage of small items, such as tie-down straps, especially on vehicles such as trucks, boats, recreational vehicles, and the like, there is very little available that is convenient to use and which is durable and economical.

10 Persons desiring to store small items, particularly in a vehicle, generally place the items in an out-of-the-way space, such as behind the seat, or in a small compartment, or in a make-shift bag. This method is not convenient, and the items frequently become lost or tangled with other small items. One item that is frequently carried, especially on a boat, or by tradesmen, or in a recreational 15 vehicle, is one or more tie down straps for securing objects. A variety of tie downs are known in the art, including tie down straps, and stretch cords or bungee cords.

For marine use, in particular, there is no suitable bag that is economical, easy to use, and resistant to the effects of water and ultraviolet radiation.

20 Further, in the transportation of some materials, such as construction materials and the like, for example, it is sometimes necessary to carry loads that are longer than the vehicle used for carrying them. These long loads accordingly protrude beyond the end of the transporting vehicle. In this event, it is generally required to tie or otherwise suitably secure a warning flag on the end of the

protruding material. A warning flag may also be required in other instances to call attention to a dangerous condition, or simply to call attention to some object or feature.

In the prior art, warning flags of various sizes and shapes are typically used for this purpose. These flags usually comprise a rectangular piece of brightly colored material, having one or more tie straps at one side for securing the flag to an object. In many instances, the warning flag is simply stapled or nailed to the object.

As currently practiced in the art, tradesmen, for example, frequently carry a supply of warning flags and tie down straps or bungee cords for use in handling materials, as discussed above. This requires storage of both the flags and the tie downs. A plurality of bungee cords, in particular, may be carried for use in a variety of ways, including use as tie downs to secure objects. These cords generally become tangled, and are easily misplaced or lost, resulting in not having the necessary tie down when needed. In addition, the flags may also become misplaced or lost, or may be used for some purpose other than intended, whereby none are available when the need arises.

Accordingly, there is need for a simple and effective bag for storing small objects, particularly in a vehicle, and that is easy to keep track of and that can insure that a warning flag and/or tie down is readily available when needed.

#### **Summary of the Invention:**

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a simple and economical means that facilitates the storage, retrieval and use of small items, especially on a vehicle such as a boat or in a truck or the like.

Another object of the invention to provide a simple and economical means that facilitates the storage, retrieval and use of small items, and which may also function as a warning flag.

A more particular object of the invention is to provide a warning flag for  
5 attachment to objects to call attention to them, and which also serves as a combined storage bag for tie downs, such as bungee cords, and the like.

A further object of the invention is to provide a bag that is shaped, sized and colored so as to be readily visible when used as a warning flag, and which also functions as a storage bag, especially to store a plurality of tie down straps,  
10 such as bungee cords and the like.

Another object is to provide a combined warning flag and bag as aforesaid, in which the flag has means for attachment of one of the tie downs, which may then be used as a handle, and/or to secure the flag to an object such as the protruding end of a long load or the like.

15 In a preferred form of the invention, the bag is made of a material suitable for use in a marine environment, and is especially suited for use on boats to store small items, such as marine quality stretch cords, for example, in a convenient but out-of-the-way location. In this form of the invention, the bag is made of an open mesh PVC material that is resistant to the effects of water  
20 and ultraviolet radiation. The open weave of the material forming the bag quickly dries and prevents the accumulation of water in the bag. A rigid header extends across the top of the bag to hold its shape and to serve as a convenient means of securing the bag to the boat and/or to attach a handle. This bar is also preferably made of a material suitable for use in a marine environment, such as  
25 ABS plastic.

**Brief Description of the Drawings:**

The foregoing objects and advantages of the invention, as well as other objects and advantages, will become apparent from the following detailed description when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like reference characters designate like parts throughout the several views, and wherein:

Fig. 1 is a fragmentary perspective view of the bag of the invention, shown being used as a warning flag on a long load;

Fig. 2 is an exploded, fragmentary perspective view of a first form of storage bag according to the invention, showing the opening in the storage bag through which objects to be stored, such as tie downs, are removed and replaced, with a plurality of tie downs about to be placed through the opening;

Fig. 3 is a front perspective view of the first form of storage bag according to the invention, shown in closed position ready for use;

Fig. 4 is a fragmentary front perspective view of the bag of figures 2 and 3, showing how the header bar is applied to the bag in this form of the invention;

Fig. 5 is a front perspective view of a second form of storage bag according to the invention, with a handle attached to the header bar of the bag;

Fig. 6 is an exploded perspective view of the header bar used in the form of the invention shown in figure 5;

Fig. 7 is an exploded perspective view of the bag and header bar of that form of invention shown in figure 5, illustrating how the header bar and bag are assembled together;

Fig. 8 is an exploded perspective view of a third, and preferred, form of the invention;

Fig. 9 is a front view in elevation of the header bar used in the preferred form of the invention illustrated in figure 8;

5 Fig. 10 is an end view in elevation of the header bar shown in figure 9; and

Fig. 11 is an exploded perspective view of the bag and header bar of figures 8 through 10, showing how the header bar and bag are assembled in this form of the invention.

10 **Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments:**

Referring more particularly to the drawings, a first form of the invention is indicated generally at 10 in figures 1-3. As shown in figure 1, the storage bag 11 is generally rectangularly shaped and is applied to the end of a load L to serve as a warning flag. The combined warning flag and storage bag has a size to

15 render it readily visible, and preferably also has a highly visible color. A tie strap 12 may be secured to the flag for attaching it to the protruding end of the load L carried on a vehicle (not shown), and the rectangular, unfurled shape of the flag as seen in this figure is maintained by a rigid header bar 13 extending across the top of the bag.

20 The bag has a hollow interior for storage of small items, such as tie downs or bungee cords C, for use as needed.

With particular reference to figures 2-4, the combined flag and bag 11 may be made of a heavy duty, weather-resistant material such as nylon or the like, preferably coated on its inner surface with a water repellent material 15.

In one specific construction of this form of the invention, the material is folded upon itself, with the water repellent lining on the inside, and stitched together at the free ends along a line of stitching 16 spaced from the free ends (see figure 2). A heavy gauge band of material 17 is folded over the stitched  
5 together free ends and secured thereto by one or more lines of stitching 18 and a plurality of spaced grommets 19 so that a loop 20 is formed by the band at the top end of the combined flag and bag. The elongate header bar 13 is placed in this loop to retain the unfurled shape of the flag and bag as depicted in the drawings, and to serve as a means of attachment of a tie strap to secure the flag  
10 to a load and/or to serve as a carrying handle.

Strips of reflective material 22 are stitched along opposite side edges of the folded material, together with side panels 23. The reflective material renders the flag more visible at night, and the side panels provide depth to the bag to facilitate storage of additional tie down cords therein.

15       A zipper 24 is provided in one side of the bag, near the stitched end 16, to provide an access opening 25 for placing small items, such as cords and the like C in the bag, and retrieving them therefrom.

The rigid header bar 13 in this form of the invention comprises an elongate rod made of a suitable material, such as ABS plastic, for example. As depicted  
20 in figure 4, a pair of openings 26 and 27 are formed through the looped band of material, whereby the end of the bag may be folded to expose one of the openings 26 or 27 for insertion and/or removal of the rod through the opening and into or from the looped end.

#### Second Embodiment

25       In a second form of the invention as shown at 30 in figures 5-7, the connector bar comprises a generally flat, rectangularly shaped bar having a first, main body portion 31 of elongate, generally rectangular configuration with a

depending flange 32 of shorter length than the main body portion. The bar may be made of any suitable material, such as ABS plastic, to render it resistant to the effects of water and ultraviolet radiation. A longitudinally extending retaining channel 33 is formed in one face of the flange, and a pair of enlarged, generally cylindrically-shaped openings 34 and 35 are formed through the top edge of the bar, with clearance cut-outs 36 and 37 formed through the bar at the inner or lower ends of the hook-receiving openings. The ends 38 of a cord C may be inserted downwardly through the openings and knots or other enlargements 39 provided on the free ends within the cut-outs to retain the ends in place (see figure 5), forming a handle. This handle may be used as a convenient means to carry the bag, and/or to support it from a hook or the like in a boat, for example.

A separate cord or cords may be wrapped around the load and hooked in the hook-receiving openings 40, 41 and 42 formed at spaced locations along the bar to tie the bag to the end of a load to serve as a warning flag.

15       A secondary body portion 43 of elongate, rectangular configuration is assembled to the flange 32 and has a longitudinally extending retaining channel 44 formed therein for mating alignment with the channel 33 in the flange 32 of the main body portion. This secondary body portion is secured to the main body portion by interengagement of a plurality of pins 45 and openings 46 formed in  
20       the respective body portions. As seen in figure 7, each of the body portions has a plurality of pins and openings aligned along opposite sides of the channels.

The combined flag and bag 30 in this form of the invention may be made of any suitable material, such as that described in connection with the first form of the invention, and is also made by stitching together the free ends of a piece  
25       of material to form front and back panels, with side panels secured between the opposite sides of the front and back panels.

In this form of the invention, a heavy seam 51 is formed along the stitched-together free ends of the bag, and the main and secondary body portions of the header bar are assembled on opposite sides of the stitched end of the flag, with the end seam 51 received in the retaining channel, and the pins 5 on one body portion received in the aligned openings of the other body portion, securely clamping the flag between the body portions. The line of stitching 16 is positioned below the connector bar, and prevents the two sides of the combined flag and bag from being pulled apart in the area of the connector bar, which might otherwise cause the body portions of the connector bar to become 10 separated.

As also seen in figure 7, holes 53 may be formed through the stitched-together end of the combined flag and bag, in alignment with the pins on the connector bar body portions, to receive the pins 45 on the header bar.

Suitable indicia 54, such as a company logo, or the like, may be placed on 15 the connector bar, if desired.

Rather than zipper 24, strips of Velcro or the like (not shown) may be provided to close the access opening 25.

### Third Embodiment

A third and preferred embodiment of the invention is shown generally at 20 60 in figures 8-11. In this form of the invention, the header bar comprises a one-piece member having an upper body portion 61 with a plurality of elongate openings 62, 63 and 64 formed transversely therethrough near the upper edge thereof, and a pair of generally cylindrically shaped openings 65 and 66 formed through the upper edge, similar to those described in the previous form of the 25 invention. A relatively thin, rectangularly shaped fin or flange 67 depends from

the upper body portion, and as depicted in figure 11, is secured between the upper ends of the bag by adhesive and/or stitching or other suitable means.

In this form of the invention, the bag is made of an open mesh PVC material, and is constructed by folding a rectangular sheet of the material so that  
5 the opposite side edges 68 and 69 are turned inwardly and stitched together, or fused together with heat, or otherwise suitably connected, and the free ends 70 and 71 of the material are then placed on opposite sides of the flange 67 and glued and/or stitched to the flange to secure the bag to the header bar. A reinforcing band of material 72 and 73 may be placed on the respective opposite  
10 sides of the upper end of the bag to reinforce the attachment to the header bar. When assembled, the stitched seams at the sides of the bag are not visible, thereby enhancing the appearance of the bag.

The open weave PVC material from which the bag is made renders it resistant to the effects of water and ultraviolet radiation, making it particularly  
15 suitable for use in a marine environment. Moreover, the open weave of the bag enables it to dry quickly, and it does not retain water when wet objects are placed in it.

An opening 74 may be formed through the main body portion 61 of the header bar for receipt of a nail or other fastener to secure the bag to a support  
20 surface. Although not shown, a similar opening may be formed through the header bar in the previously described form of the invention.

Although this invention has been illustrated and described in detail herein, it is to be understood that various modifications and variations may be made in the construction without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, as  
25 defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is: